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THE INFLUENCE OF WOMEN'S CLUBS IN NEW ENGLAND AND IN THE MIDDLE-EASTERN STATES

BY MAY ALDEN WARD

The best definition yet given of the club movement is that of Mr. W. L. Bodine, superintendent of compulsory education in Chicago. He says, "Women's clubs are the natural product of a progressive sex living in a progressive age. They stand for the home, for the school, for art and literature and music; for domestic science and for the intellectual advancement of the American woman who presides over the American home. They are not theoretical," he adds, "they are practical; they act, they do things for the good of society; for the good of the community and of the country. The greater woman means the better nation." Evidently Mr. Bodine recognizes the movement as a national influence.

For the sake of convenience these articles are so divided that the work of different sections of the country is reported separately. It must not be imagined, however, that the work is done sectionally, or that the General Federation encourages sectional feeling; on the contrary it is one of the greatest unifying influences of the present day. It has perhaps done more than any other one agency to destroy sectional feeling. It binds together the women of the east and the west, the north and the south in bonds so strong that sectional prejudices are forgotten.

This article is to be limited to the clubs of New England and the Eastern-Middle States. For many years New England and New York boasted of being the pioneers in the club world. Sorosis and the New England Woman's Club were organized in 1868, and each claimed the distinction of being the first woman's club formed in the United States. Each has presented proofs and arguments to uphold its claims but the question of priority is not of so much importance now, since other clubs have come forward in other parts of the country, claiming a much greater age. Indiana and

Michigan point to clubs dating from the fifties. With so many conflicting claims any historian will find it difficult to decide just when and where the club movement began. We may however agree with the decision of Edward Everett Hale that "women's clubs came in upon us just at the time when they were most needed."

We are to review here only the records of the past decade, but in looking at the achievements of these later years it would be ungrateful not to recognize the fact that all this has been made possible by the labors and influence of these earlier clubs. Whatever may be true of other sections, the club movement in the east owes its inspiration and its growth to the New England Woman's Club, and to Sorosis, rightly named the mother clubs. They pointed out the way, they organized and fostered many new clubs, and they educated public opinion. To Sorosis belongs the additional credit of having started the movement which led to the formation of the General Federation.

The task set before us is to show "what the women's clubs of the East have stood for during the last decade, and to give a resumé of the results of their work in influencing the public sentiment of the region, respecting education, the standard of home life, the industrial position of women, the protection of childhood, and the moral and æsthetic life of the community."

The Club and the Home

Beginning then with the most important circle, let us ask what the club has done for the home? It has done much to raise the standard of home life in that it has helped thousands of club members to become better mothers and better home-makers. It has from the first urged the serious study of all subjects pertaining to domestic economy. Each state federation has a committee on household economics, and the chairman is usually an expert who has given years of study to the subject. These committees have prepared outlines for club study covering such subjects as home-sanitation (including drainage and ventilation), the building and furnishing of a home, food-values, sanitary and scientific cookery, and the relation of employer and employee. Many of the clubs have adopted these courses of study, and the number of those interested is constantly increasing.

But the influence of the club on the home is not confined

to the homes of club members. It extends to countless other homes because of the persistent efforts of the clubs to have domestic science made a part of the curriculum in the public schools. The majority of club women believe that some training in domestic science is an essential part of a girl's equipment for life. They have labored unceasingly therefore to have this study introduced into the schools, and in many of the cities and towns of the East they have succeeded. The Cantabrigia Club of Cambridge, Mass., obtained the consent of the school committee to establish a school of domestic science. The club furnished the plant and for four years sustained all the expense of the experiment. At the end of that time the benefits were so obvious that the city assumed the responsibility. This is but a single instance of many that might be quoted.

Another phase of club and federation work has had its influence on the home. The Arts and Crafts committees have not only proclaimed the gospel of combining beauty with utility in the home, they have also stimulated an interest in handicraft, and have fostered home industries in the different states, in a most helpful and practical manner.

The Club and the School

Outside of the home, the next larger interest is the school. What do the clubs of the East stand for in education? To answer this question in detail would require more space than the *Annals* would be willing to give to this article. From kindergarten to college there is no part of the educational field in which they have not interested themselves. From the first the club women have advocated the kindergarten as a part of the public school system, believing that it supplies an element not found in the homes of a great many school children. The yearly reports of the state federations furnish a long list of cities and towns which owe the introduction of the kindergarten to the women's clubs. The usual method is for the club to assume the responsibility and the expense of the experiment, and to carry it on until the authorities recognize its value and adopt it. The New England clubs have long been especially active in this direction, and the movement is constantly extending to other states. At the last annual meeting of the Pennsylvania Federation a resolution was passed recommending the

educational committee and the clubs to take full, immediate, and practical measures toward planting free kindergartens in every community.

In the same way Manual training has been promoted, the clubs often paying for its introduction, in order to educate the authorities as to its value. In Massachusetts eighteen clubs have taken this for their especial task in the last few years. The Federations of Maine, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut have urged this subject upon their members. The work of the clubs in this particular direction has often been far greater than appears upon the surface, because even after the successful establishment of manual training, by means of a long and expensive campaign of education, the entire establishment is sometimes destroyed by the incoming of an ignorant or penurious board, whose first recommendation will be the overthrow of manual training, thus requiring the whole battle to be fought over again. In some instances this conflict has to be carried on anew with every recurring year in order to maintain that which has been secured with so much labor and expense.

Other phases of school reform and improvement have been undertaken by individual states with great results. The Maryland Federation labored successfully to have medical inspection established in the public schools of Baltimore. In the same state a movement for a school attendance law was inaugurated by the Arundell Good Government Club, and the law is now in successful operation in Baltimore. The appointment of truant officers was a part of this work, and the enforcement of this law is now supervised by an able official — a woman.

Another encouraging phase of school work undertaken by the clubs is the establishment of stamp-savings stations, to encourage the pupils in habits of thrift. Special stamps are sold to the pupils by authorized persons, and when a certain sum has been reached it is recognized by the saving's banks. By this means three hundred school children in Winchendon, Mass., have opened bank accounts. The public school pupils of Clinton, Massachusetts, have saved over two thousand dollars in five months. Brockton, Massachusetts, has over a thousand depositors in four grammar schools. It is estimated that this feature of club work is helping the children of Massachusetts to save not less than ten thousand dollars per

annum, and in future years this will largely increase, which is necessary as an object lesson if the purpose is to be realized. But of course the real purpose is the establishment of habits of thrift which will have far-reaching effect in character building. Nearly all reformers agree that one of the greatest evils to be overcome in this country, is the natural or acquired spend-thrift tendency of the American child, which leads to so many other vices.

The decoration of the school rooms and the improvement of the grounds have engaged the attention of the clubs in all the states of New England and of the Middle East. In hundreds of cases the barren, dreary school room, which the child instinctively hates, has been transformed beyond recognition by the tinting of walls and ceiling, and the installation of photographs, casts and friezes. Most notable work of this kind has been accomplished in Portland, Maine, where the clubs have expended large sums to obtain surroundings for the children which will cultivate a love of beauty and develop an appreciation of art value.

Important work of this kind has been done by the clubs of New York where the art committee of the State Federation offers advice to the clubs in regard to the principles of decoration, and the correct colors and tones for walls and surfaces, including those proper for the healthful condition of the eyes as well as for the general sense of beauty. The committee also furnishes adequate lists of appropriate photographs, prints, casts and reliefs for the successful management of this delicate and difficult art of school decoration, where the best intentions often end in failure through the lack of knowledge or experience. Work of the kind has been accomplished in almost every city and town of the East.

The love of beauty is also cultivated in the children by the improvement of the grounds, the planting of trees and vines, and the offering of prizes for school gardens. In many instances attention has also been given to the securing of better buildings and larger grounds, as well as to the location of the same in healthful and attractive surroundings. This has extended to so remote a distance as the improvement of the approaches and the general surroundings, in buildings already located, where such unimportant matters as environment had attracted no attention from practical-minded building committees. While an intangible quantity to estimate, it is nevertheless almost certain that in no point

has the quiet influence of the clubs been exerted to better purpose than in this matter of desirable location of school buildings with reference to ample grounds, dignified approaches, and if possible the natural surroundings of parks or open spaces where trees and grass plots may double the value which the original cost of the building adds to the community.

Questions connected with organization and administration in the public schools have also commanded the attention of the club women in the East. The State Federations have joined hands with the Association of Collegiate Alumnæ, and conference committees have been appointed to consider these problems. The conference committee in Massachusetts, before taking any action, obtained the aid of an advisory council of educational experts among them being President Eliot, of Harvard University, Thomas M. BaHiet, then of Springfield, Sarah L. Arnold, Dean of Simmons College, and Alice Freeman Palmer. A report filled with valuable suggestions was prepared by the advisory council and a copy thereof was sent to every federated club, together with a set of questions covering the same ground. These questions were intended to help the club women to discover and re-adjust improper conditions in their own communities. The aim of the committee has been to create a strong public demand for good teachers, for right conditions in school buildings, and for adequate salaries, that the best men and women may be secured for the schools. "This means," says the chairman, "no more politics in the schools, but boards made up of men and women who have the real good of the schools at heart, who shall appoint teachers for merit alone and not for favoritism of any kind." It means also the schools for the children, and not for the exploitation of home talent, and it means that it is the duty of the school board to secure the best available teachers regardless of the place of residence. The need of well equipped teachers, and of adequate salaries in the elementary grades of the public school is the subject they have kept constantly in view.

In Connecticut this union between club and college women has led to the formation of an organization called the Connecticut Women's Council of Education, in which the following bodies are affiliated: The Connecticut State Federation of Women's Clubs, the Connecticut Branch of the Association of Collegiate Alumnæ, the Women's Christian Temperance Union, the Congress of

Mothers, the Holyoke Association, and the Teachers' League. Each society is assigned a definite line of special work, though all work in unison for certain reforms in the laws of the state, and for better prepared and better paid teachers.

The educational interests of the clubs of the East are not confined to the public schools. Many of them have endowed scholarships in the women's colleges. Others, not able to command so large a sum at one time, are paying from year to year the tuition of girl students. In addition to these lines of work in which all have an interest, several of the states are carrying on some special work adapted to local needs. The New Hampshire Federation has a permanent fund for the education of girls; each girl who receives this aid pledges herself to teach at least two years in the common schools of the state, after receiving her degree. The Maine Federation is concentrating its attention upon the rural schools. The New Jersey Federation has a fund for maintaining boys at the George Junior Republic. The New York Federation has been raising a sum of money for the establishment of a trade school for girls. At the last annual meeting it was decided not to try to found a separate school, but to turn the money over to the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union, of Syracuse, on condition that the organization resolve itself into a trade school for girls.

The Rhode Island club women succeeded in getting through the legislature a bill authorizing the board of education to provide instruction for the adult blind in their homes. As another state enterprise, the Vermont Federation has been striving for the consolidation of the small district schools into larger graded schools, with provision for carrying the scholars from a distance to the central point where the school is located. This is a much needed reform for Vermont, as it has been elsewhere, because it is impossible to secure good teachers for these small districts, or even to keep the school buildings in proper repair.

In Pennsylvania one special line of work has been the starting of school gardens, by giving plants and seeds to the school children with prizes to those achieving the best results therefrom. Both Pennsylvania and Massachusetts are giving attention to the "School City," the method developed by modern educators for teaching children the practical duties of citizenship, by having the

children organize and maintain all the institutions of municipal government, by means of boards and committees through which each student citizen shall learn the duties which his elders practice or fail to practice, as it more often happens.

The Massachusetts club women have another special line of educational work. Believing that patriotism is not bounded by state lines, they have joined hands with the women of Georgia in their efforts to combat the evils of child labor in that state. For four years the Massachusetts Federation has helped to maintain a model rural-school in the mill region of Georgia, where in addition to the usual elementary studies the children are taught manual training, domestic science, and gardening. Another open door was found when an opportunity was given to co-operate with the club women of Tennessee in their beautiful settlement work among the mountaineers. Two years ago the Massachusetts Federation established a settlement at Happy Valley, similar to the one maintained by the Tennessee Federation at Walker's Valley. Here cooking, sewing, and all the homely arts of every day living are taught to the mothers as well as to the children. This summary gives but an inadequate answer to the question, "What do the women's clubs of the East stand for in education?"

The Club and the Community

Outside of the family and the school, the next larger interest is the community. What have the Eastern clubs done for the community? If we could give the report of the civic committee of each club and of each state Federation we should have a partial answer to this question. The rule by which the club is guided in civic work is to "Do the task that lies nearest," whether it be to remove a pile of unsightly rubbish, to wage war upon the tree pests, or to prevent the destruction of a landmark. An impartial observer of the club movement says: "Wherever the public health, beauty or morality may be benefited, there the Women's Club is quick to find its opportunity. It is perhaps in such opportunity that it finds its most helpful field of action. Women have the leisure, at least all the leisure there is, and they may wisely use it to look about them and discover the ugly, the unwholesome and the unlovely. To arouse the community to a sense of this unpleasant trilogy, to furnish plans and money to transform it into

beauty, cleanliness and morality might well be, and frequently is, the chief object of organizations of women."

The most inspiring reports of civic work come from Pennsylvania. A passion for civic righteousness seems to have taken possession of the women of the Keystone state. "We find everywhere," says one of them, "a lively interest manifested by our women in municipal affairs. Women have long been house cleaners, and are showing themselves qualified to be town cleaners as well." The pioneer in work of this kind is the Civic Club of Philadelphia. Its chief function has been the educating of the city to a sense of its own needs. It equipped the first summer playground, and maintained it until public opinion required playgrounds to be incorporated in the school system. The city now maintains twenty-four playgrounds. The Civic Club organized the first vacation school; the city now maintains fourteen such schools. The Civic Club started a school for backward and deficient children; the Board of Education now recognizes it as a necessity and has assumed its support. The Civic Club provided free public concerts on the piers; the city has taken them off its hands. Its last work has been the starting and equipping of school gardens. It is also carrying on the program of the Good Citizenship League in eleven public schools.

The clubs of Pittsburg and Allegheny have united to form a permanent civic committee, which has sub-committees on child labor, tenement house reform, and public baths, also on cleanliness of streets, street-cars and public parks, as well as on the disposal of garbage. The clubs of Allegheny carried on, last summer, nine play-grounds, and vacation schools with a daily attendance of between three and four thousand children. The clubs of Pittsburg have an equally creditable report in regard to vacation schools and play-grounds. The Civic Club of Harrisburg, after an experience of seven years, gives the following encouraging report: "It is no longer necessary for us to continue, at our own cost, the practical experiment we began in street cleaning, or to advocate the paving of a single principal street as a test of the value of improved city highways, nor is it necessary longer to strive for a pure water supply, a healthier sewage system, or the construction of play-grounds for the pleasure of our fellow citizens. This work is now being done by city councils, by the

Board of Public Works, and by the Park Commission. We have a Park Committee appointed to co-operate with the Commission on parks and parkway construction." This club, however, has not ceased its effort for the public good. It has a league for good citizenship, a committee on school decoration, and another on traveling libraries for factory employees, besides a committee to visit the jails and to inspect the city dumps.

The interest in public improvement is not confined to the clubs of the cities. Nearly every club in the Pennsylvania Federation reports some definite effort for the benefit of the community. One club bought a street sprinkler for the town, and raised enough money to keep it in operation all summer. Another supports a trained district nurse for the benefit of the poor. One keeps the town clock in order and beautifies the grounds about the railroad station. The Civic Club of Carlisle offers a prize to the school children for the best essay on civic improvement.

The clubs of New Jersey are not behind those of Pennsylvania in their interest in town improvement. The report of a club in Cranford may be taken as a typical one. It tells of good work in collecting the refuse, in cleaning the streets, in cleaning up waste places, waging war upon impure milk; and it has established a hospital fund that the needy, even though a stranger, may be cared for if sick or injured. Flemington, a town of twenty-five hundred inhabitants, has a women's club of eighty members, which reports the following improvement: A plot of ground belonging to the county was a receptacle for unsightly and unsanitary refuse. The town authorities would do nothing toward cleaning it because it belonged to the county. The women's club obtained permission to clear up the place, and with a subscription of one hundred dollars commenced work. Fifty dollars was paid to a landscape architect for plans and a list of materials. Each grade in the public schools was asked to give an evergreen tree. The doctors and lawyers were asked to give the shade trees, and so on until the whole town became interested. Iron settees were made at the town foundry, the band-stand was removed to this location; and, altogether, what had been a disgrace became one of the ornaments of the town. The same club erected a drinking fountain, also succeeded in having the surroundings of the railroad station and the freight office made more attractive, and aided the

school children in starting flower gardens. Jersey City clubs silenced the junk men's bells, and solved the waste-paper problem. Other clubs report that street signs have been placed, posters removed from trees, improper show bills and pictures taken down, approaches to cemeteries improved, and better police protection obtained in suburban villages.

Equally strong is the civic pride of the club women of New York. Joseph Choate said of them in a recent address: "They are vastly more interested than we are in the administration of the criminal law, in the preservation of law and order, and in the suppression and punishment of crime." He declared that Mr. Jerome would owe his election more to the women of New York than to the men. The women certainly did valiant and effective work in the campaign for reform of municipal affairs. The chairman of the Civics committee of the New York Federation urges each club to select the evil that seems greatest in its own particular place:

"See if there is nothing needed in the way of material municipal cleanness, or moral municipal cleanness; the training of good citizens, or the making the city or town more beautiful. Under these heads would come: Clean streets, pure water, garbage disposal, prevention of the smoke nuisance, prevention of unnecessary noises, putting a stop to uncleanness in public places and public conveyances; also the planting of trees, shrubs, and vines along streets and public highways, reducing the bill-board nuisance, training children in leagues of good citizenship, and last but not least, looking after the moral atmosphere of the cities and towns, especially that surrounding the school children."

To recount the work done for community betterment by the clubs of New York and of the six New England states, would simply be to repeat what has been said of Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Each club has attacked the local problem that was most pressing. Local philanthropic work has appealed especially to the clubs of New England. Many of them are supporting vacation houses, fresh air camps, district nurses, and hospital beds. The Woman's Charity Club, of Boston, built and owns a hospital, raising annually about ten thousand dollars for its support. While the Women's Industrial Union, of Boston, expends annually over forty

thousand dollars in helping the poor to help themselves, by means of acquiring some self-sustaining employment.

The Club and the State

Notwithstanding the great activity of the clubs in town and city improvement, their energies are by no means limited to local interests. By far the most significant feature of the club movement has been the formation and growth of state federations, which is simply the recognition by women of the advantages of united, organized action. Maine was the pioneer in this direction, the Maine Federation having been organized in 1892. Massachusetts followed in 1893, and all the Eastern federations have now passed their tenth milestone. The far-reaching influence of this form of organization cannot be measured, but it is already evident that there is no more effective machinery in existence for the creation of a right public opinion. This is not simply the result of organization, but also of the size and mere numerical proportion of the civic bodies thus brought together, which has now become so conspicuous as to make them truly representative of their respective states. The New York Federation now numbers two hundred and twenty-three clubs, with a membership of forty-two thousand. The Massachusetts Federation numbers two hundred and thirty clubs, with thirty-four thousand members.

Who would place a limit to the influence which may be exerted in a commonwealth by these thousands of earnest, intelligent women, when fully awake to their duties and responsibilities as citizens. Nor is the question of their being fully alive and awake as to their responsibilities any longer in doubt. With each year the machinery becomes more effective as the states become more thoroughly organized. Especially is this noticeable within the last year or two, wherein the public spirit of the rank and file of the membership has approximated the enthusiastic devotion which a few years ago was only found as a rule among our most advanced leaders. So pronounced has this become that men and women the country over, who are trying to obtain practical results, as creators of public opinion, have come to look upon a federation meeting as a golden opportunity. They have come to regard the meetings of these organizations as probably the shortest and quickest of all

the avenues by which the public conscience may be reached and public questions influenced.

The club women are closely related, by communal and family ties to the most influential men in all our communities. They may be the busy American men who have little time for anything outside their immediate responsibilities, but so much the greater is the opportunity to influence them directly through the members of their own family and their own community. Besides this the proceedings of the clubs are now reported in the daily press with a fullness which is rarely obtained by any except political interests, and this widens the influence of the clubs to the entire community. This is not simply to please the club members, for the press would respond to no motive that was not deeper than that. It is because of the value to the entire community of the subjects which are brought before the club meetings. It is for the reason above given, because the creators of public opinion recognize the clubs as their best and most effective allies and are therefore always glad of the opportunity to present the vital issues of the day and hour to audiences which will at once assure them of the widest hearing, and the most sympathetic co-operation. The clubs are selected by natural law from the women who think, and who as a rule have the masterful capacity to act in obedience to definite thought and conviction. Add to this the power of feminine tact, feminine conscience, and feminine spirituality, and as the St. Paul Pioneer press has remarked, "their power for good becomes irresistible."

To bring thousands of such women into one form of organization, with allied purposes and high ideals was a great work. The women who planned it were women of high aims and of noble purposes, whose only thought was that of service to the entire community. At the first annual meeting of the Massachusetts Federation the subject assigned for discussion was: "What are the duties of the Women's Clubs to the State?" It was treated under four heads: educational, philanthropic, political, and æsthetic. This is the question which the federations are still trying to answer, and as "New occasions teach new duties," the answer can never be a fixed formula. Each year seems to point out some new avenue of usefulness.

Owing to the recent efforts after unification, each state federation now has its permanent committees corresponding to those

of the National Federation. Of these, the committees which most directly concern state interests are, respectively, the committees on Civics, Forestry, Industrial Conditions, Child Labor, Library Extension, Pure-Food, and above all Civil Service Reform.

Of the above, forestry goes hand in hand with civics, and it is difficult sometimes to separate the two subjects. The definite objects of the forestry committees are: the creation of state forest reserves, the establishment of some instruction in forestry in every school, the appointment of a trained forester in every state. They endeavor also to create enthusiasm for the planting of trees, and for the protection of those we have. The results in tree planting have been most satisfactory. One club in Pennsylvania, by offering prizes to the school children, secured the planting of one thousand trees in four years. The children have also been instructed how to care for the trees. A club near Boston planted four hundred shade trees along the streets of the town. Another club planted, in the last year, fifty-seven trees, two hundred and seventy vines, and two hundred and thirty shrubs. Work is also being done to protect the trees against their natural enemies: human, other animal, and insect. Special efforts are being made to prevent the frightful destruction of road-side trees by trolley and telephone companies.

In addition to these interests which are common to all the states, several of the eastern federations have had special problems of their own. Everyone knows the heroic labors of the New Jersey Federation to prevent the destruction of the Palisades. A fund is now being raised for the purchase of a memorial park and the erection of a lookout tower to perpetuate the memory of the victory. The work done by the Pennsylvania Federation for forest reserves is also a matter of history, as Pennsylvania now has the finest forest reserves in the eastern states, and the effective work of the clubs in securing them is well known.

The task laid upon the New Hampshire Federation is that of protecting the forests of the White Mountains from the vandals who would convert them into lumber and paper. New York women have been doing similar work for the Adirondacks and the Catskills, as well as trying to prevent marauders from robbing Niagara of its grandeur. The women of Massachusetts found their forestry problem at their very doors. It is that of waging persistent war-

fare against the gypsy and the brown-tail moth, the deadly enemies of the shade trees. The forestry chairman has the zeal of a crusader, and so contagious has been her enthusiasm that nearly every club in the state responded to her call. One club alone by obtaining the aid of children, secured the burning of 375,000 nests. At the same time continuous pressure was brought to bear upon the legislature to obtain an appropriation for the extermination of the pests.

The Civics committees of the federations are also fighting the enemies of the Commonwealth. They have done much for the prevention and cure of tuberculosis, by establishing camps, by distributing literature, and by keeping before the people in every way the measures to be taken to protect the public health. The Massachusetts Federation owns a traveling health library, which contains books relating to the retention and the restoration of health from this disease, also photographs showing the proper outdoor method of treating tuberculosis.

The Civic committees have labored to eliminate the tramp evil, by trying to convince the average woman that indiscriminate back-door feeding is a wrong to the community: they have also encouraged legislatures to establish a work test with proper lodging houses. Other public enemies against which their efforts have been directed are: the bill-board nuisance, patent-medicine frauds, and indecent advertising.

The Civics committee is also doing constructive work in regard to the treatment of delinquent children. The Eastern federations are copying the West in their efforts to have the system of Juvenile Courts established. It is conceded that the five bills passed by the Pennsylvania legislature, providing for the Juvenile Courts, owed their passage to the persistence of the Pennsylvania Federation and its president. The New York Federation is trying to secure an appropriation for salaried probation officers.

It is not possible to overlook the work of the federations in establishing libraries. The home, the school, the community, the state and the nation have all benefited by the labors of the Library Extension Committees. Most noteworthy results have been accomplished in Maine, where the State Federation not only provided traveling libraries for the less favored places but, in 1898, secured the passage of a law creating a library commission and

establishing traveling libraries as a state provision. The State Commission has always included one or more of the officers of the federation in recognition of their interest in the subject. Nearly a hundred traveling libraries are now circulating in the state, and the growth of permanent free libraries has also been remarkable.

The Delaware Federation has done notable work in this field. Beginning by sending out traveling libraries at its own expense, it has received three appropriations from the state, and has succeeded in securing the creation of a State Library Commission. Vermont is placing libraries in the rural schools. New York is establishing a permanent library at Stony Brook, on the coast of Long Island, where the population consists of sea-faring men and their families. The Pennsylvania Federation secured the passage of bills to increase the efficiency of the traveling libraries of that state.

As nearly every village in Massachusetts has a free library, the Federation has been able to aid the less fortunate states. The committee has sent out to various parts of the country, in the last three years, forty-seven traveling libraries in cases, several permanent libraries to rural schools, and in addition over twelve thousand books to various places in the West and the South from which requests have come. All of these were for permanent libraries.

Industrial Conditions of Women and Children.

A problem that comes very near to the hearts of club women is that of the position of women and children in the industrial world, including the new conditions which surround the wage-earning woman, and that most sorrowful product of our civilization, the wage-earning child. The account of what has been done by the clubs of each state to lessen the evils of child labor, has already been published in the Annals of May, 1905. Since that time, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts have made some progress in protective legislation. In the East as in the West, this is the subject which takes precedence of all others, and each club and each state federation may be counted upon to continue the fight against this evil and co-operate with every agency that is seeking to remove it.

Each state federation has its committee on the Industrial Con-

dition of Women and Children. The program outlined by the Pennsylvania committee is a good illustration of the method adopted. The duties of the committee as indicated in the program are four-fold:

First.—To gather information and statistics of the deplorable and almost unbearable conditions, under which women and children were working in this State.

Second.—To find from physicians, philanthropists and experts, just what the ideal requirements should be, concerning the age, the sex, the mental and physical progress, the hours of work, the sanitation, and the living wage, in the many varied industries in the State.

Third.—To discover what efforts are being made to enforce existing laws — poor though they may be — what reforms are being agitated, and what public or private philanthropy is doing to help the situation.

Fourth.—When all these facts have been gathered and authenticated, to place them at the disposal of every Woman's Club in the State, so that each Club may become in its turn, a center for a campaign of education, and be enabled to use to the full its influence. And in so doing the Federation will throw its great power towards ridding Pennsylvania of the stigma of its unintelligent and inhumane treatment of the women and children who work.

In Massachusetts a joint committee from the State Federation and the Woman's Educational and Industrial Union has been carrying on an investigation into the dangerous and injurious trades in which women are engaged. A special agent was employed and much valuable information obtained in regard to the rubber trade, cordage factories and steam laundries. This information was used effectively at the State House at the hearings on the bill calling for an appropriation to secure an investigation of dangerous trades by the Board of Health. This last winter it was decided to make a thorough study of the conditions under which women and children are working in the different industries throughout the state. The academic part of the investigation includes a comparative study of the laws creating facilities for factory inspection throughout the United States. The committee is preparing to publish a simplified statement of the laws of Massachusetts relating to women

and children, which will be distributed to club women and wage-earners.

The Federation has done all that it could to further the cause of trade-training for girls, believing that the one great gift which can be conferred upon the girl who must earn her own living is to help her to become an effective worker. All possible influence was brought to bear in favor of the measure just passed, providing for industrial training for boys and girls. On the other hand they try to protect the product of such toil from selling at too low a remuneration. All our Eastern states co-operate with the Consumers' League in trying to educate the conscience of womankind so that we shall not be willing to buy or to wear garments that have cost too much of human life. The local branch of the Consumers' League is generally a member of each state federation, and most of the states have a special committee to further the objects of the League.

The Massachusetts Federation has one organization which ought to be mentioned, though we can do little more, for to describe its usefulness would require a volume. It is the Women's Educational and Industrial Union, of Boston.

Organized in the eighties, the Union now includes a sustaining membership of three thousand women; it possesses real estate worth one hundred and fifty thousand dollars, and has an annual income from all sources of about thirty thousand dollars. It is a vast hive of co-operative industry for the benefit of working women and women producers. It secures a market for the product of women's industry to the amount of nearly fifty thousand dollars per annum.

In addition to its Handiwork Department, the Union carried on for sometime a School of Housekeeping which is now a part of Simmons College. It has also an Employment Department of a very different character from the ordinary employment bureau. Its Committee on Hygiene is constantly looking after the well-being of women and children in factories, and especially in any kind of employment where surroundings are likely to be injurious. The Department of Practical Ethics endeavors to secure justice for any class of people who may be neglected. It initiated the movement to improve the condition of the Adult Blind. The Befriending Committee is one of the most beneficent which could exist in a modern city, and its name explains its office.

But probably the most significant of all these activities is the Union's Protective Department, which looks after the rights, legal and ethical, of any woman in the city whose case is brought to its attention. The Union employs a lawyer who gives free legal advice to those not able to pay for it. As an object lesson in trade-training the Union has maintained classes in millinery, in dress-making, and in salesmanship. After two years of unwearied effort, the Union has succeeded in securing legislation to protect the ignorant wage-earner from the evils of the installment plan, and from the tricks of the unscrupulous money-lender.

The Pure Food Campaign

The report of the Pure Food committee of the General Federation is published in this number of the Annals. It is not necessary therefore to dwell upon what has been done in the East. The report shows that the General Federation and the state federations stood as a unit for the passage of the pure food bill, as they did for better state laws, and the better enforcement of the laws already in existence. Senators and congressmen from every state testify to the pressure brought to bear upon them by the women's clubs. Now that the national bill has passed, there is still work to be done in the way of disseminating information in regard to foods, and food adulterants; and in examining the sanitary conditions controlling the production, storage, and sale of food products.

Interest in Legislation

Each state federation has a legislative committee — not for the purpose of initiating legislation, but to examine measures presented, bring before the clubs those which should receive attention, and obtain concerted action when needed. That the influence of the clubs upon legislation is not underestimated is shown by the fact that whenever a bill is presented relating to the material or moral welfare of the public, an effort is sure to be made to obtain the endorsement and co-operation of the state federation of women's clubs. An imposing list could be made of the measures which the clubs have helped to pass or to defeat.

Civil Service Reform

Of all the tasks undertaken by the federated clubs by far the most important is the work for civil service reform, because its

principles underlie all the others and are necessary for their success. This is not the place to dwell upon the value of the merit system, but rather to speak of the efforts of the club women of the East to carry its message far and wide. The Women's Auxiliary, of the Civil Service Reform Association, was organized in New York in 1894. A few years later the Massachusetts Federation was induced to take an interest in the subject, and to appoint a committee to further it.

In 1900, at the convention of the General Federation in Milwaukee, a place was given on the program for a fifteen minute paper. In 1902, an hour was allowed for the presentation of the subject, and a civil service reform committee was appointed. In 1904, at the St. Louis Convention, a whole session was devoted to it, and the assembly voted to make this one of the main issues of the Federation for the next two years. When this subject was first brought before the clubs, it was necessary to educate the club women themselves; to convince them that this was a question in which they above all others should have an interest. The Auxiliaries of New York, Massachusetts and Maryland did valiant service in this direction. Literature was distributed, public meetings were held, speakers were sent free of charge to any club willing to furnish an audience. Club women were quick to recognize the importance of this issue and its close relation to every phase of human life. It offered a natural and legitimate field for patriotic work.

The results of this work have been almost incredible. The majority of the state federations have already appointed civil service reform committees, and many of the clubs have formed classes for the serious study of the merit system. A syllabus, prepared by Professor Salmon, of Vassar College, was published by the Massachusetts Federation and thousands of copies were distributed. A history of the movement prepared by Mrs. Oakley, was published by the General Federation and widely circulated. The purpose of the federation is that "Every woman in the United States shall understand the principles on which our government was founded, and use her influence toward maintaining them."

One of the far-reaching results obtained has been that in connection with the public schools. Pamphlets prepared for the purpose by Mr. Edward Carey and Mr. Clinton Rogers Woodruff have

been furnished to schools willing to use them. Up to the present time over one hundred thousand copies of these pamphlets have been sent, and there is record of over thirteen hundred schools and colleges which have used them. This work is carried on in the belief that "when every child in the United States is grounded in civil service reform principles, the spoils system will be condemned by public opinion and will cease to exist."

Prizes have been offered by the Auxiliaries for the best essay on the merit system. A beautiful medal has been designed for the New York and the Massachusetts Auxiliaries, by Miss Frances Grimes, under the direction of Mr. St. Gaudens. Bronze replicas of this medal are to be used by individuals and by clubs as the reward for school prize-essays on civil service reform. It is believed that the medal will be more attractive than any money prize in teaching of the subject and its reward. "The figure of a woman typifying the State, with the impartial scales in one hand, is specially timely in this year of civic victories, and the words, 'The best shall serve the State,' were written for the medal by her whose life has fulfilled them, whose death now illumines them with rays of light,—Mrs. Charles Russell Lowell."

At present the attention of the clubs is being directed to state and municipal institutions. Clubs are asked to investigate local conditions and to seek especially for the application of civil service reform principles in institutions where the dependent, the defective, and the delinquent are cared for, that those to whom the care of these unfortunates is entrusted may be chosen for fitness and not for political influence. Legislation is also being carefully watched that no backward steps may be taken in any state. A bill giving preference to the Spanish war veterans, on the civil list, has twice been presented to the Massachusetts legislature. A protest was sent in carrying the signature of 3484 club women.

The initiator of this work for civil service reform, the very soul of it from the beginning up to the present time, is a frail little woman, born in South Carolina and living in Massachusetts, with patriotism so large that she has no knowledge of sectional lines; with a love of country so deep, and a passion for social righteousness so strong, that she has been able to kindle the fire of enthusiasm in the hearts of thousands of club women who have never seen her face. It is because of such leadership that the results

have been achieved. It is because of the thousands of women with a spark of this same divine fire, working together for better homes, better schools, better surroundings, better industrial conditions, and better laws, that we have faith in the club movement as a beneficent influence in the United States. They may not be able to solve all the problems of our complex civilization, but the organized effort of these thousands of earnest, intelligent women, cannot be without its effect on the future of our country.